GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:112
ANSWERED ON:23.11.2016
Passport Offices
Ajmal Maulana Badruddin;Tripathi Shri Sharad

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passport offices currently functioning in the country, State-wise;

(b) whether there is an inordinate delay in issuance of passports and if so, the details thereof;

(c) the prescribed time limit for issue of passports under different categories and the State-wise number of applications pending during the last three years in the country;

(d) the mechanism in place to resolve the complaints of applicants within the stipulated timeframe; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to make the process of issuing passports easy and quick?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 112 REGARDING "PASSPORT OFFICES" FOR ANSWER ON 23.11.2016

(a) The number of Passport Offices currently functioning in the country is 38. The State-wise list is enclosed at Annexure-I.

With the implementation of the Passport Seva Project (PSP), the Ministry established 77 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) in various States/Union Territories which were operationalised by June, 2012. The list is at Annexure-II. Subsequently, to provide more access points for passport services, the Ministry decided to set up 19 additional Passport Seva Laghu Kendras (PSLKs) out of which 12 PSLKs have already been operationalised at Aizawl (Mizoram), Imphal (Manipur), Shillong (Meghalaya), Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh), Dimapur (Nagaland), Agartala (Tripura), Gangtok (Sikkim), Kalaburgi (Karnataka), Bhimavaram (Andhra Pradesh), Karimnagar (Telangana), Darbhanga (Bihar) and Puducherry. Four PSLKs at Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Udaipur (Rajasthan), Solapur (Maharashtra) and Siliguri (West Bengal) are expected to be established during the current financial year 2016-17 and the remaining three at Leh (Jammu & Kashmir), Kharagpur (West Bengal) and Kolkata-II (West Bengal) will be set up at a later date.

(b) The time taken for issue of passports has been progressively reduced in recent years. There has also been considerable improvement in the last two years in getting appointments at the PSKs. As on 30 June 2016, out of 89 PSKs, appointments were available in 53 PSKs within 1 calendar day, 22 PSKs within 2 to 7 days, 10 PSKs within 8 to 14 days, 2 PSKs within 15 to 21 days and 2 PSKs from 22 to 30 days.

The process for issuance of passports sometimes becomes longer due to the following reasons:

i. Late receipt of police verification reports beyond the stipulated time of 21 days;

ii. Receipt of incomplete police reports;

iii. Increase in demand for passports of nearly 15% per annum; and

iv. Shortage of manpower in the Central Passport Organization to deal with the increasing demand for passport services.

(c) The Ministry endeavours to issue passports within the indicative timeframe provided in the "Citizen's Charter of Central Passport Organisation of the Ministry of External Affairs for Issuance and Delivery of Passport Services 2016". Time limits given below are subject to Police Verification (PV) or any such inquiry or any other factor which may be beyond the control of the PIA.

Nature of Service Indicative Timelines Remarks

Fresh (First Time) Passport
(Police Verification required before issuance) Up to 30 working days [PV period excluded] From the date of receipt of complete documentation and enrolment and subject to the satisfaction of PIA and receipt of clear Police Verification Report

Fresh (First Time) Passport
{PV required after issuance or where PV is not required}
i. Tatkaal
ii. Government/
PSU employees etc. Up to 7 working days From the date of receipt of complete documentation and enrolment and subject to confirmation of authenticity of Verification Certificate/ Identity Certificate/ No Objection Certificate and satisfaction of PIA
Re-issue of passport on expiry or on exhaustion of Visa pages Up to 7 working days
(In cases where pre-police verification is not required) From the date of receipt of complete documentation and enrolment and subject to the satisfaction of PIA provided there is no change in personal particulars
Re-issue of passport due to (a) change in personal particulars, and/or (b) in lieu of lost/stolen/damaged/
mutilated passport Up to 7 working days in cases where pre-police verification is not required and up to 30 working days in cases where PV is required [PV period excluded] From the date of receipt of complete documentation and enrolment and subject to the satisfaction of PIA and requisite verification/ clearances
Miscellaneous Services like Police Clearance Certificate, Surrender Certificate or any miscellaneous certificate based on passport Up to 3 working days (In cases where police verification is not required) From the date of receipt of complete documentation and enrolment and subject to the satisfaction of PIA and requisite verification/ clearances
The passports are issued Passport Office-wise and the data is compiled accordingly. The list of the number of applications pending for passports during the last three years in the country is enclosed at Annexure-III.

(d) Under the Passport Seva Project (PSP), the Ministry of External Affairs has put in place a mechanism to resolve the complaints of applicants. A Public Grievance Redressal Cell (PGRC) has been established in the CPV Division under the supervision of the Joint Secretary (Passport Seva Project) and Chief Passport Officer. All Passport Offices handle public grievances through the Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). To obviate complaints and disseminate information related to passport services and handling of grievances of citizens and their feedback, a National Call Centre with a toll free number (1800-258-1800) operates in 17 languages on 24x7 basis, which at present works on a central system platform. Also, an e-mail-based helpdesk is functioning which can be accessed by citizens through the portal: passportindia.gov.in. The status of the complaints/grievances can also be monitored online.

To track citizen sentiments and strengthen feedback for Passport related services through social media, "Twitter CRM (Customer Relation Management) Platform" has been started by the Ministry in February 2016. Every RPO has got a Twitter Handle to respond to the grievance logged through Twitter.

Apart from this, Passport Offices hold Passport Adalats regularly to redress the grievances of passport applicants. These Adalats have been very useful in disposing of old and complex cases through direct interaction with the applicants.

(e) The Government has taken various steps to make the process of issuing passport easy and fast. The Ministry of External Affairs has made two major changes on 26.01.2016 that have expedited the process for first time passport applicants as well as made it more convenient to secure an online appointment at the local Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs). As per these changes, the first time passport applicants who furnish Aadhaar Card, Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC), PAN Card and an affidavit of non-criminality in the prescribed format, will get faster service, without payment of additional fees, subject to successful online validation of Aadhaar. The passports under this liberal dispensation will be issued on Post-Police Verification basis.

The second measure pertains to securing online Appointments for submission of passport applications at PSKs. The new provision is allowing applicants to choose any appointment date from the earliest five available dates (working days) for scheduling/ rescheduling an appointment for passport related services. Earlier, the System used to offer only one available date to the applicant for seeking appointment for passport related services. These measures have made the process of applying and issuing passports easy and quick.